

Contributing to The Conversation

The Conversation is always looking for academic experts who can help a non-academic audience understand research that's relevant to them. You can pitch articles within your area of expertise to The Conversation's editors anytime. Many UBC scholars have done it and have reached tens of thousands of readers across several continents through The Conversation's international network of websites. We've asked several UBC scholars whose Conversation articles have been widely read to provide advice for colleagues who might also want to make a pitch. Contact media.relations@ubc.ca or 604.822.6397 for more information.

Getting started



First off, I'd say go for it. Make the pitch and make clear why it's timely and/or of interest to a broader audience. That's been all it took for me.

• **Kathryn Harrison**, Professor, Department of Political Science



The Conversation gives a bit more flexibility and freedom than other media in terms of what we want to share and how we want to make our points. This is why I like to work with them.

• **Yue Qian**, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology

Pitching your article



If you can plan ahead, look at the big events for which your piece has relevance and time it accordingly. This could be a major piece of legislation you know is coming, a new regulation, or a major global event such as annual climate meetings.

• **Hisham Zerriffi**, Associate Professor, Department of Forest Resources Management



Have a hook. Think about how your work could appeal to the broader audience and how to make it sound more intriguing. My piece about Korea was for Valentine's Day, when everyone was talking about love. I posed a "counterintuitive" question: Why have young people in South Korea quit dating? This piece was the most read for that month.

• **Yue Qian**, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology



If you can explain your research finding or idea in such a way that someone who is not in your field understands and gets excited about it, that's a good sign that you're onto something you could pitch to The Conversation.

• **Frances Chen**, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

Writing your article



Keep a broad audience in mind beyond your academic discipline. Think about which other academics and scholars could benefit from your work, and make explicit connections.

• **Jiaying Zhao**, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology



Use appropriate references to show sources of evidence. A good way to introduce such references, especially if they are by famous people or involve a famous document, is to mention the name in the text itself (e.g. "As the 1946 Acheson-Lilienthal plan warned..."). You can include sources in the form of hyperlinks, which is common in a lot of online news articles.

• **M.V. Ramana**, Professor, School of Public Policy and Global Affairs

Working with editors



The Conversation provides a unique opportunity to work with highly skilled editors who understands the world of academics and journalists. Be appreciative of their expertise.

• **Michelle Stack**, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Studies



The Conversation editors will help, but I find that I have most control of my message when I stick to the word limit and try to write in an accessible manner from the very first submission. This is also true for op-ed submissions to regular print and online newspapers, where you typically don't even see the edits until it's published.

• **Kathryn Harrison**, Professor, Department of Political Science

